



Need for US Ratification of International Ship Air Pollution Treaty
International Maritime Organization
Convention on the Prevention of Pollution from Ships
MARPOL 73/78 Annex VI

Status: The U. S. has not yet ratified the international treaty establishing the first engine emission standards for the international shipping fleet, which went into force May 2005. The treaty limits smog-producing nitrogen oxide emissions from large marine diesel engines and sets caps on the sulfur content of marine bunker fuel.

Ratification Priority: The U. S. needs to ratify the treaty in order to enforce it and so that we can join other nations in pressing for stronger engine and fuels standards and the establishment of Sulfur Emissions Control Areas around North America.

Support: Ratification of MARPOL Annex VI is supported widely by environmental, community, and public health groups; US agencies, ports and the shipping industry.

Background: In 2003, the Bush Administration sent the Annex VI Advise and Consent Package to Congress for approval. It was assigned to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Since then the ratification process has been delayed by the development of implementation legislation by federal agencies.

Getting Congress to act on ratification is urgent because shipping volume is projected to double or triple in US over the next 10 to 20 years, according to press reports and port estimates. Along with this growth comes accelerated air pollution in port communities and coastal regions. Ship emissions constitute a growing source of air pollution and are becoming a greater portion of overall air emissions as other mobile and stationary sources become cleaner.

Diesel exhaust is a known or suspected carcinogen and is a cause of illness such as asthma and other respiratory illnesses. People in port communities experience higher incidence of illness and premature death due to diesel exhaust from ships, port operations and goods movement. Air and water quality is degraded by diesel exhaust, which also contains greenhouse gases.

Because the diesel engines on board ocean-going vessels are operated without any air pollution controls, they produce large volumes of deadly diesel exhaust every day. Ratification of Annex VI is a critical component of national and state strategies to achieving emissions reductions from ocean-going vessels. By itself, Annex VI will not significantly reduce shipping emissions, but it provides a mechanism for establishing better fuels and emissions standards for the future.

Action needed: The Senate Foreign Relations Committee should make ratification of MARPOL Annex VI a priority for 2005 and seek cooperation from the appropriate federal agencies to complete the implementing legislation as soon as possible.

Bluewater Network – a division of Friends of the Earth is an environmental advocacy organization that works to protect water and air quality, wildlife, and public lands from environmental damage caused by vehicles, vessels and thrillcraft.